

ASTHMA,
BRONCHITIS, & WINTER COUGH;
THEIR TREATMENT,

By Internal Remedies and Inhalations.

BY JOSEPH DUFFY, M.H.P.A.

Thoroughly, Quickly, Safely.

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Asthma and Hay-Asthma.

1.—Asthma is an intermittent disease characterised by attacks of difficult expiration. In confirmed asthmatics, the difficulty of breathing is more or less constant, especially on going up-hill or walking quickly.

2.—SYMPTOMS.—Frequently the patient is awakened about midnight or in the early morning, by a sensation of weight and tightness of the chest, and impending suffocation. He rises and leans forwards, struggling and gasping for breath, or springs from bed to an open window, or he seizes a chair or other piece of furniture for support, and to assist respiration. Whistling and wheezing are heard in the chest, the face becomes red or livid, the eyes stare, the heart palpitates painfully, perspiration trickles from the forehead, and the whole expression is one of pitiable anguish.

3.—IN HAY-ASTHMA, the above symptoms are associated with those of Influenza—sneezing, running from the nose, &c. It occurs chiefly in summer.

4.—PATHOLOGY.—The air-tubes of the lungs

are encircled by minute bands of muscular structure, which, like other muscular fibres, may be affected by spasms. These spasms, of course, contract the air-tubes, and the difficulty of breathing, and the wheezing respiration are occasioned by the air being forced through the narrowed channels (*Professor Guernsey*). The distress is however augmented by the over-distention of the heart by the impeded blood, and by the accumulation of air in the lungs, forced in as by a force-pump till the lungs are ready to burst, or actually give way, when *Emphysema* results. Though *Asthma* is generally spasmodic, some cases no doubt arise from other pathological states—as *Bronchial Œdema*. Such was the case with a gentleman for some time under my care at Reading. He suffered from almost incessant dyspnœa, and seldom obtained a few hours sleep uninterrupted by difficult breathing. This theory is supported by the fact that he derived much benefit from *Digitaline*.

5.—DIAGNOSIS.—In *Asthma*, the chest is dilated and resonant, *expiration* alone being impeded; in *Croup*, the lungs are contracted, *inspiration* being obstructed; in *Congestion of the Lungs*, the breathing is short and laboured, but quiet; in *Emphysema*, the difficulty of breathing is constant, though varying in intensity, never disappearing suddenly; the dyspnœa of *Heart-Disease* is free from wheezing, of shorter duration, and marked by greater lividity.

6.—CAUSES.—Descent from parents suffering from Asthma, Phthisis, or Bronchitis; sudden changes of temperature, congestion from a chill; Bronchitis, damp, fog, smoke, dust, the vapour of sulphur, bromine, arsenic, or copper; chlorine, phosphoric anhydride, nitrous oxide and other noxious gases, the pollen of hay and a variety of flowering grasses and plants, the odour of ipecacuanha, &c.; Indigestion with wind, repression of eruptions, and strong mental emotions.

7.—TREATMENT.—*Atropine* (3x), or *Belladonna*.—Asthma from a chill, shock, or congestion; with red face, severe headache and throbbing of the carotid arteries. Variable respiration, pain in the chest, and constriction of the larynx.

Ipecacuanha (2x).—Rapid, anxious, moaning respiration, with rattling of phlegm, nausea, cold sweat and anxiety. Hay-Asthma, with great difficulty of breathing, and tightness of chest.

Arsenicum (3).—Burning pain in the chest from time to time; tightness in the chest and stomach; panting, wheezing respiration, with great anguish and prostration, the fit ending in cough and expectoration of viscid mucus. It is an invaluable remedy in chronic cases with shortness of breath on taking exercise, and in Hay-Asthma, with much watery discharge from eyes and nose, sneezing, chilliness and dyspnoea.

Aconitum (1).—Short and anxious breathing, with fever, flushed face, full pulse, great agitation, congestion in the head and dizziness.

Veratrum Album (2x).—Fear of death, gasping respiration, blue skin, cold perspiration, and cold extremities.

Cannabis Sativa (1x).—Humoral Asthma—panting respiration and heaving action of the heart, followed by profuse expectoration.

Natrum Oxysulphate. (1x).—Attacks recurring in the early morning, with profuse expectoration of phlegm, and bronchitic complication. I have seen wonderful improvement from this remedy.

Nux Vomica (2x).—Attacks excited by late suppers, Indigestion, Constipation, excesses at table, or anxiety, occurring after a meal, or after midnight. Slow wheezing respiration, short cough and difficult expectoration of blood-tinged phlegm. The dyspnoea is mitigated by change of position.

Kali Hydriodicum (2x).—Humoral Asthma, with moist skin during the attack, chiefly in patients of a rheumatic, gouty or syphilitic diathesis.

Caladum Seg.—Asthma, alternating with Eczema—burning eruption on arms, chest, or vulva. Relieved by perspiration.

Digitaline (3x).—Persistent dyspnoea, with painful laborious action of the heart, and scanty urine.

Antimonium Tart. (2x).—Humoral Asthma, especially in old men or children, with suffocative attacks, wheezing rattling cough, and expectoration of mouthfuls of phlegm.

DIRECTIONS.—Two pilules or two drops of the remedy or remedies selected may be given every half-hour till the symptoms decline. In the intervals, a dose once or twice daily, to prevent a recurrence.

8.—**INHALATION.**—If the patient is not promptly relieved by a dose or two of the remedy selected, a few grains of *Stramonium*, *Lobelia*, *Arsenicum*, or *Sulphur*, or a few crystals of potassic nitrate, chlorate, or permanganate, may be thrown on live coals so that the fumes evolved may permeate the patient's room, when relief will probably ensue. If more convenient, the potassic nitrate, chlorate, or permanganate may be mixed with strong sulphuric or hydrochloric acid in a warm cup. Again a spray-producer or inhaler may be used with ten drops of the tincture to a pint of hot water.

Sulphurous Acid, *Bromine* (1x), *Chlorine* (1x), *Iodine* (1x), *Lobelia* (o), *Stramonium* (o), *Tabacum* (1x), and *Hepar Sulph.* (2x) are well suited for inhalation; but any of the above, and also

Arsenicum (2x), and *Ant.-Tart.* (2x), may be used with the spray-producer. Sulphur or *Sulphurous Acid* should not be used for persons who have been exposed to sulphur-vapours, but experience will soon guide to the selection of an appropriate remedy both for internal use, and for inhalation.

9.—HYGIENIC TREATMENT.—Asthmatic patients should take little solid food after two p.m., dining before that hour. Late and heavy suppers are to be carefully avoided. Cold or tepid salt sponge baths in the morning, light plain food, regular meals, warm clothing. And the avoidance of all irritants and exposure to severe weather, are highly commendable. A change of residence, from town to country, from low damp situations to a light and dry or sandy soil, from inland to the sea shore, and even the opposite changes, are frequently beneficial. The smoky atmosphere of a large town proves as grateful to some patients as the sea breeze, the bracing mountain air, or the pellucid breeze and cloudless skies of Italy to others.

IN HAY-ASTHMA, removal to the sea-shore, a large town, or barren upland district, is always advisable.

Acute Bronchitis & Laryngitis.

(COLD IN THE CHEST.)

10.—In Influenza and Cold in the Head, the inflammation often extends along the mucous membrane to the throat and vocal organs (*larynx*), when the disease is properly called *Laryngitis*. Passing down the windpipe to its division and entrance to the lungs, *Bronchitis* results; and extending still further to the smallest or capillary tubes, we have the most dangerous form, termed *Capillary Bronchitis*. In its various forms *Cold in the Chest* is very common in our damp, foggy, and changeable climate. In spring and winter it is very fatal to old men and children. Near 47,000 deaths occur in England every year from *Bronchitis*, more than one third the victims being children. In the first week of this month (December, 1874), 472 deaths resulted from this disease in *London alone*.

11.—SYMPTOMS OF LARYNGITIS.--Hoarse, husky, weak, or wheezy voice; frequent hawking up of mucus, sometimes streaked with blood, dry harsh hacking cough; tenderness, constriction of, and sensation of an ulcer in, the throat.

12.—TREATMENT OF LARYNGITIS.—*Aconitum*.—Early symptoms—feverishness, &c.

Spongia.—Faint, hoarse voice, tenderness of throat to touch, and whistling cough.

Argentum Metallicum.—Swelling, rawness, and soreness of the throat, with dry, short, hacking cough.

Hepar Sulphur.—Hoarseness, metallic, barking cough, and expectoration of loose phlegm.

Lachesis.—Sensation of a band tied round the throat, or of an ulcer within.

Kali Bichromicum.—Tough, stringy phlegm.

Natrum Oxycolor.—Irritation in the throat, causing frequent hard cough, worse in the morning.

(*Acidum Nit.*, or *Merc.-Ein.*—Chronic cases of a syphilitic character.)

13.—ACUTE BRONCHITIS.—SYMPTOMS.—Chills or shivering followed by fever-symptoms, hot skin, quick, feeble pulse, diminished, high-coloured urine, foul tongue, pain in the forehead, eyes, and chest, worse on coughing, lassitude, heat, soreness and tightness of the chest; quick, difficult, anxious breathing, at first dry, afterwards with wheezing and rattling of phlegm; and severe cough, dry in the early stage, afterwards loose, with tough frothy expectoration, often streaked with blood. As the fever-symptoms subside, the expectoration becomes copious, thick, purulent, and greenish yellow. In favourable cases, the symptoms decline in three or

four days, and entirely disappear in eight or ten. When improperly treated, Bronchitis may last many weeks, or become chronic.

14. — CAUSES. — Cold, chilling, east winds, draughts, sudden changes from warm to cold or damp air—especially after speaking or singing, deficient clothing, wet feet, and sudden changes of weather. It may also appear during the course of other diseases.

15. — TREATMENT. — *Aconitum*.—Fever-symptoms, with short hard cough, and pain in the chest.

Veratrum Viride.—Fever and vomiting, flushed cheeks, and working of the nostrils.

Bryonia.—Affections of the larger bronchi, with pain under the breast-bone, much yellow or blood-streaked phlegm, and violent, shaking or suffocative cough.

Antimonium Tartaricum.—Capillary Bronchitis, the rattling of phlegm being heard over the whole chest, with difficult, wheezing, or whistling respiration, fits of coughing, and copious expectoration.

Ipecacuanha.—Suffocative cough causing retching or vomiting.

Kali Bichromicum.—Tickling and tenderness in the throat. Soreness, ulceration or plugging of

the nose. Pain striking through the chest. Tough, blackish, or white, or purulent yellow expectoration.

Phosphorus.—Oppression of breathing, pain in throat and chest, weak voice, dry cough, rusty coloured sputa, and debility—the patient scarcely having strength to detach the phlegm.

DIRECTIONS.—One pilule or one drop of the appropriate remedy or remedies may be given every hour when the symptoms are urgent. As improvement advances, a dose every two, three, or four hours will suffice.

16.—INHALATION.—The indicated remedy may be applied locally by means of a spray-producer—five or six drops of any of the tinctures, or as many grains of the trituration, being added to the tea-cupful of warm water. In addition to the above mentioned remedies, the following are frequently of great use: *Acidum Tannicum* or *Creasotum* for profuse expectoration; *Natrum Oxtychlor.*, for frequent sensation of suffocation; *Iodium*, for scrofulous patients; or *Bromium*, for recurring attacks. Inhalations from hot water are also very useful, though perhaps less certain than the spray. For this purpose five drops or grains of the remedy may be added to the pint of boiling water, and the vapour breathed from a pitcher or inhaler for five or ten minutes. Inhalation by either method is a valuable adjunct to internal treatment.

17.—HYGIENIC AND LOCAL TREATMENT.—In severe cases the patient should be propped up in bed by means of a bed-rest or pillows. The chest may be rubbed night and morning with *Phosphorised Oil*. A grateful and soothing effect immediately ensues. A large hot linseed-meal poultice to the chest helps greatly. In winter a fire is necessary night and day, to maintain the temperature of the patient's room about 68° Fahr. Dishes of hot water should be placed near the bed, or a kettle kept constantly boiling over the fire so as to moisten the atmosphere. Water, gum-water, barley-water, toast and water, linseed-tea and gruel should alone be allowed till the fever abate. Then mutton or chicken broth, beef-tea, and jelly may be taken, gradually returning to solid food.

18.—CAUTIONS. — When the above directions are carefully carried out, a speedy recovery almost invariably ensues. Yet from the dangerous nature of the malady, especially in delicate patients, and in infants and aged people (whose powers of endurance are feeble), professional aid is frequently advisable.

Convulsions (in infants), coldness of the hands and feet, cold sweat, pale bluish colour of the lips and cheeks, extreme difficulty of breathing, rattling in the throat, inability to get up the phlegm and a sense of suffocation, generally predict a fatal termination.

Chronic Bronchitis and Winter's Cough.

19.—Chronic Bronchitis has various forms, but is generally marked by habitual cough and shortness of breath. It frequently arises from neglected colds, repeated attacks of Acute Bronchitis, or defective treatment. The inhalation of dust is a common cause of the chronic form, especially in millers, bakers, grocers, miners, masons, and cotton corders. It may also result from Gout, Rheumatism, Hydrocephalus, Heart-disease, &c.

20.—VARIETIES.—(a) *Winter Cough*, is characterised by a cough recurring every winter. At first the cough is slight, with scanty yellowish-white expectoration, the breathing and general health being good. Each winter the symptoms intensify and become more persistent, till the cough remains almost constant, though aggravated on each return of cold weather, and the general health declines.

(b) *Catarrhus Senilis*—the cough of old age—occurs in the decline of life, when vitality runs low. It is marked by great difficulty of breathing, and cough, worse at night and in the morning, and relieved by expectoration of tough mucus.

(c) *Dry Bronchitis*.—This form presents troublesome dry cough, with very scanty expectoration of

pearl-coloured phlegm, oppression of the chest, and difficult breathing.

(d) *Bronchorrhœa*. — Its characteristic is a profuse discharge of clear watery fluid after each attack of coughing. It is generally due to valvular disease of the heart.

(e) *Plastic Bronchitis*. — Distinguished by the expectoration of solid twigs or branches of plastic matter, and blood.

(f) *Mechanical Bronchitis*, varying according to the cause.

21. — **TERMINATION.** — If neglected, Bronchitis induces Heart-Disease, Consumption, Asthma, or Dropsy, and so indirectly causes dissolution. With care and efficient treatment, Chronic Bronchitis may often be cured. Even the most desperate cases may be mitigated to an astonishing extent, as I have repeatedly witnessed.

22. — **TREATMENT.** — In addition to the remedies mentioned in the previous sections (Nos. 12, 15, and 16,) the following are excellent remedies for the chronic forms of Bronchitis.

Atropine. — Constriction of the chest, dry cough, difficult breathing.

Natrum Oxtychlor.—Profuse expectoration, chiefly in the morning.

Cactus.—Bronchorrhœa; sensation of a band tied round the heart.

Arsenicum.—Dry hacking cough, with scanty expectoration, sometimes blood-streaked. Oppressive difficulty of breathing, with burning or bruised pain in the stomach or chest. The symptoms are worse on walking quickly, going up stairs or ascending an eminence. Debility, Heart-Disease, or dropical tendency.

Stannum.—Bronchitis with profuse expectoration of sweetish or salty phlegm, threatening to end in Phthisis.

Pulsatilla.—Loose Cough, especially in females. Soreness in the chest or abdomen, with much salt, bitter, yellow, whitish, or bloody expectoration. Queasiness, vomiting, sensation of suffocation from the vapour of sulphur, rattling of mucus, and a general tendency to mucous discharges.

Nux Vomica.—Dry Bronchitis; convulsive and fatiguing cough, with splitting headache.

Kali Hydriodicum.—Bronchitis with a gouty, rheumatic, or syphilitic basis.

Carbo Vegetabilis.—Hoarse feeble voice, cough night and morning, with greenish expectoration.

Sepia.—Cough, chiefly in the morning, in delicate persons. Soreness of the chest and much putrid, salty, bloody, yellow or greenish expectoration.

Silicea.—Obstinate shaking cough, with transparent mucus.

DIRECTIONS.—One pilule or one drop may be taken every two or three hours, or oftener if the symptoms are severe.

23.—HYGIENIC TREATMENT.—Aged patients require great care, light food, and warm temperature, especially during cold nights. Much may be done towards throwing off the affection by a mild dry atmosphere, cold sponge-baths every morning, daily out-door exercise, medicated inhalations (see No. 15) in the evening, seasonable clothing, and the avoidance of all exposure to damp foggy weather, and piercing north-east winds. A good respirator has its advantages, when obliged to be out in unfavourable weather, especially on going from a warm room into the cold, damp, or mid-night air.

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